

AZERBAIJAN: triumph of justice

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The outgoing year was officially declared a Year of Shusha in Azerbaijan – this small town turned 270. It would be hard to name another city that has presented Azerbaijani and world science and culture with so many outstanding names. It is no coincidence that Shusha, which has long earned a reputation as the “conservatory of the Caucasus”, has now received the official status of the cultural capital of Azerbaijan. In addition, it was declared the cultural capital of the Turkic world in 2023. Shusha was liberated from more than 28 years of Armenian occupation two years ago, and today it is in the spotlight of both the state and the public of the country. Extensive work is underway to overcome the consequences of the occupation and revive old cultural traditions. The phenomenon of Shusha, the past and the present of this city against the backdrop of the history and culture of Karabakh are described in an article by the Minister of Culture of Azerbaijan, Anar Karimov.

Our audience might be interested in an article about the movement for the expansion of the role of women in various spheres of public life in Azerbaijan from the middle of the 19th to the early 20th centuries, a period marked by the rise and liberalization of social, cultural and then political life. The culmination of this process was the granting of electoral (active and passive) rights to women in the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920) – a unique phenomenon for the Muslim world of that time.

The topic of relations with Armenia continues to dominate the public and political agenda of Azerbaijan and, therefore, our magazine. This issue contains an article on the history of the transfer of the western part of the historical Zangezur Mahal (province) of the Azerbaijani Karabakh Khanate to Armenia in the 1920s after the Sovietization of Azerbaijan. As a result of this action by the Soviet regime, Azerbaijan was cut off from the Nakhchivan district and lost an overland connection with Turkey, while Armenia received a common border with Iran. Also related to this topic is an article about the Azerbaijani city of Aghdam, which was practically wiped off the face of the earth during the 28-year-old Armenian occupation of Karabakh.

Shortly after the arrival of the new year, Azerbaijan will be marking another anniversary of the tragic events of January 1990. The military aggression of the Soviet regime, along with territorial claims and ethnic conflicts, fits seamlessly into the chain of events that represented geopolitical aggression against Azerbaijan launched in the early 19th century. This issue presents an article where the Black January of 1990 is described as a tragic, but also a glorious page in the history of the Azerbaijani people. On the other hand, this bloody development only accelerated the collapse of the USSR.

History decreed that there are a number of remembrance dates in Azerbaijan’s calendar. But after the victory in the 2020 war, the tragic pages of our history started to be perceived somewhat differently, as stages of trials on the path to the triumph of justice. Today, Azerbaijan is an upbeat country, a country that believes that shocks and losses will only act as a part of people’s historical memory.